

The SPEAKER pro tempore: Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DeFazio) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DeFAZIO: Mr. Speaker, I just recently sent 850 Oregonians off to Afghanistan to fight the resurgent Taliban and Osama bin Laden, the perpetrators of 9/11. September 14, this House, on a proud day, with one exception, voted to authorize the war in Afghanistan to take out the Taliban, take out the perpetrators of 9/11, al Qaeda. That was nearly unanimous.

But sadly, the Bush administration and the Republicans in Congress distracted us onto a path of a war in Iraq 1,143 days ago. 2,497 servicemen killed, 18,490 wounded. First it was weapons of mass destruction. Then it was about 9/11. Then it was about building democracy.

But now the Republicans want to pretend that it has to do all about the war on terrorism. They mentioned al Zarqawi. The Pentagon wanted to take out al Zarqawi. They had him in their sights before the war in Iraq, and the Bush White House and DICK CHENEY wouldn't let them because it would hurt recruitment for the coalition of the willing to invade Iraq, where al Qaeda did not exist.

If you strip out the rhetoric from this nonbinding resolution, with no Democratic alternative, no amendments allowed, it is a stay the course resolution with an open-ended commitment. As the President said, a future President will decide when U.S. troops will leave.

The SPEAKER pro tempore: Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DeFazio) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DeFAZIO: Mr. Speaker, despite the rhetoric on the other side of the aisle, ground zero on the global war on terror is not, never was Iraq. It was Afghanistan; 9/11, it was planned in Afghanistan by Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, with the complicit help of the Taliban.

In a near-unanimous vote on the floor of this House, we voted to go in there and root them out and end that threat once and forever. But something bad happened on the road to victory, and

the eradication of the Taliban and al Qaeda, and the capture, dead or alive, dead or alive, of Osama bin Laden. Remember that.

We got mired in Iraq . And today the Taliban, al Qaeda, and Osama bin Laden are still at large and they are resurgent. I just saw 800 Oregonians off to Afghanistan. We need more troops there. We need to finish the job we abandoned to go into Iraq.

But 1,093 days ago, a complicit, compliant Republican-dominated Congress acceded to the Presidential demand to divert our energy into an unnecessary war in Iraq . I was one of the 60 percent of the Democrats to vote ``no."

Here we are, 2,497 troops have died, 18,490 seriously wounded. We all honor those troops and do not question that. But we disagree, not on the noble service of the troops, but the competence of the leadership of President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and Secretary Rumsfeld in initiating an unnecessary war in Iraq and insisting on an open-ended, indefinite commitment of U.S. troops in the middle of a civil war.

The President has said, ``Bringing U.S. troops home from Iraq will be decided by future Presidents." That means after 2009. That is what George Bush is talking about. That is not acceptable.

At its core, this resolution says stay the course indefinitely. We should be debating a real policy on Iraq , not a nonbinding politically motivated resolution. We should be debating the Murtha resolution, a real plan.

As a member of the Out of Iraq Caucus, I resent the fact that we have here a meaningless, nonbinding Karl Rove-politically inspired resolution on the floor, not amendable, no substitutes allowed; and they call that a debate on the policy in Iraq.

They say they are honoring the troops. That is a dishonor to the people of America and those who serve us. And they talk about cut and run. We have won. Saddam Hussein, he is on trial. They have a Constitution. They have a government. They have succeeded. We have

succeeded.

But they have a sectarian problem. They have been fighting for 1,400 years. And they are going to continue fighting. We need to negotiate a timetable with their legitimate government to get the U.S. troops redeployed, out of Iraq , to other hot spots and bring the remainder home.